

I like the Peanuts cartoon where Lucy demands that Linus change TV channel by threatening him w/ her fist if he didn't do as she asked. Linus asks, "What makes you think you can walk right in here and take over?" Lucy says, "These five fingers...Individually they're nothing but when I curl them together like this into a single fist they form a weapon that's terrible to behold." Linus says, "Which channel do you want?" Then he turns away, looks at his fingers, and says, "Why can't you guys get organized like that?"

We've been in a series in 1st Peter entitled **GLOW**. When something glows it emits a steady radiance of light for others to see. In this epistle, Peter calls on Christians to emit the steady radiance of Christ in them into the world around them by calling us to a life of submission to Christ. **The simple reality is the world will only see Christ thru us if they see Christ in us. Meaning we've got to get ourselves organized under Him and in alignment w/ His Word.**

The most noticeable way for people see Jesus in our lives is in our attitude/conduct w/ others. In particular, Peter points out (4) primary areas where our submission should thrive:

- **Formal** Relationships – in submission to gov.
- **Financial** Relationships – in submission to work
- **Family** Relationships – in submission to our spouse

The final area where our submission bears witness is in our *fellowship* relationships w/ other believers w/in the church. Peter states that the *good life* requires that these relationships interact and intersect.

Today we're going to finish this discussion of submission by organizing our thoughts around our responsibility w/in the family of faith. We're going to look at (4) principles we need to possess to be in a right relationship w/ our fellow believers so we might proclaim the truth of Christ to others.

Finally, all of you (believers) live in harmony w/ one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, compassionate and humble.

Do not repay evil w/ evil or insult w/ insult, but w/ blessing, b/c to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

For whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it.

For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against

those who do evil. 1 Pt. 3:8-12

Have you ever heard the saying – **Your attitude determines your altitude**? I think Peter would agree w/ such a notion. So much of the Christian life is about our attitude. In fact, Paul challenged the Philippians (and us) to have the same attitude that Christ had for us.

*Is there any encouragement from **belonging** to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make my joy complete by agreeing wholeheartedly w/ each other, loving one another, and working together w/ one mind and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had for you. Philippians 2:1-5*

Peter says there are (6) qualities essential to a right attitude that will determine your altitude in the faith:

I Seek HARMONY

harmony – like-minded. The idea is of an *orchestra* – while we all play different instruments, b/c we're tuned to the same pitch and playing the same score, we make music together.

As Christians, we will not always see eye-to-eye. We will not always walk in step together – but we can be committed to the same mission/priorities in Christ. We can strive to accomplish the Great Commission as we live in community together spurring each other along toward love/good deeds.

Spurgeon said while we may never be unanimous w/in the church, we can be united if our resolve is to glorify God.

Meaning that while we don't always think alike, we can commit to thinking together. We can work w/ each other on a common mission. We can get in the boat and row together in the same direction, at the same pace, and at the same cadence – so that together we can accomplish our mission.

II Express SYMPATHY

sympathetic (*sumpatheis*) feeling what others feel so you can respond sensitively to them at the point of their need. It means to *suffer with* – meaning you feel it in your heart.

This isn't always easy. I must confess that before we were blessed w/ a son w/ special needs, I'd often see families facing their unique challenges, and I felt sorry for them. But now my heart goes out to them. I feel w/ them – and I care.

The key is to NOT always think only about yourself. Our attitude should be like Christ – who put everyone before Himself. **Look again at *Philippians 2*.**

You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality w/ God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a servant and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. Philippians 2:5-7

III Pursue LOVE

love (*philadelphoi*) refers to brotherly love. I think it's interesting Peter uses this term instead of *agape*. This isn't the fruit of the Spirit God produces thru an abiding life, but the affection we muster up from w/in for our fellow man.

Some scholars believe the emphasis should be on *brothers* more than on *love*. And I think I agree.

brother – refers to one born from the same womb. Inferring that b/c we've been born again from the same *spiritual womb* (so to speak). We're now family in the faith – thus we should view and love each other as family.

IV Display COMPASSION

compassionate (*eusplagchnoi*) good bowels/tender-hearted. To feel it so deeply in your gut you're moved to action.

The idea is for you to have such deep feelings for someone or something that compassion pours out of you.

V Crave HUMILITY

humble (*tapeinophrones*) lowliness of mind. Yet humility isn't thinking too **lowly** of yourself but thinking **correctly** of yourself in light of who God is.

Alex Haley, author of *Roots*, had a picture in his office of a turtle sitting on a fence post. He said, “When you see a turtle on a fence post, you know he didn't get there by himself – he had some help. Haley said, "Anytime I start thinking, 'Wow. Isn't it marvelous what I've done?' Then I look at that picture and remember how *this* turtle (me) got up on that post."

Humility says – *I don't deserve the credit. I don't deserve the glory. I didn't get here on my own; God helped me.*

If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. Galatians 6:3

CEO of F500 was at gas station – as he exits, he notices his wife talking to the station attendant. Come to find out she dated the guy in high school. As they got on their way, the CEO said, “I know what you're thinking. You're thinking I'm glad I married you instead of him or else I'd be the wife of a gas station attendant instead of the wife of a CEO of a F500 company.” W/out missing a beat, the wife says, no! I was thinking if I'd married him, he'd be the CEO of a F500 company and you'd be a gas station attendant.

Humility is not thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less. *C.S. Lewis*

Always remember – **the biggest difference b/w you and God is that God doesn't think He is you.** Think accurately!

VI Offer BLESSINGS

Do not repay evil w/ evil or insult w/ insult, but w/ blessing, b/c to this you were called so you may inherit a blessing. For, whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it.

do not repay – *stop returning*. It means don't retaliate. Peter says an evil response is never an option for a believer.

Peter addresses (2) particular areas – actions/words.

evil (*kakos*) refers to having cruel ***actions*** conceived from wicked intentions – Peter says never respond to sin w/ sin. One wrong doesn't make a right.

Whether w/in the church or in the world, a believer should never return evil w/ evil. And not only our actions but also our words.

insult (*loidoria*) an abusive railing against; to curse or speak evil against by gossip, slander, or malice. To malign.

- **Gossip** is speaking **truth** to harm someone
- **Slander** is speaking **falsely** to harm someone
- **Malice** is speaking **falsely** to their face to harm

And God said that not one of these responses should ever come from the mouth of a believer.

Paul – *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice w/ those who rejoice; mourn w/ those who mourn. Live in harmony w/ one another. Don't be proud, but be willing to associate w/ people of low position. Don't be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace w/ everyone.* Rm. 12:14f

bless (*eulogeo*) it means *to speak well of* – to honor. We get the word eulogy when often occurs at a funeral when we speak well of another – only in this case, we are to speak it while the person is alive.

Don't let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. Ephesians 4:29

If you want good to come to you then do/say good to others.

In everything you say and do, do it for the glory of God. 3:17

There you have it – the SIX things we need to get organized in our faith so we can GLOW in fellowship w/ one another and effect the Gospel into all the world.